

**Leaving Certificate**  
**Subject Choice Information Booklet**  
**Coláiste Chú Chulainn**



**Coláiste Chú Chulainn**  
**Cúram. Forbairt. Feabhas.**

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this booklet is to provide pupils with the necessary information to choose the subjects for the Leaving Certificate which suit their needs and interests. Choosing subjects to study in the Leaving Certificate is not easy, and pupils must consider their possible future college choices and careers when doing so. Consultation with teachers, parents, pupils and guidance staff is essential. **PUPILS SHOULD READ THIS BOOKLET FULLY!** Students should never choose a subject without knowing what they will be studying. It is important to note that some future careers require certain subjects at leaving certificate (e.g., medicine requires a strong knowledge of chemistry).

We pride ourselves here in Coláiste Chú Chulainn agus Coláiste Lú on our academic excellence. We believe that informed subjects choices are crucial to this success. The remainder of this booklet will try to explain the process involved in making subject choices in Coláiste Chú Chulainn agus Coláiste Lú and will provide detailed information on each subject available in the school, both compulsory and optional.

**Christine McSorley Guidance Counsellor**

## **Subject Choice Process in Coláiste Chú Chulainn agus Coláiste Lú**

In general, pupils study **seven subjects for Leaving Certificate**.

English, Mathematics and Irish (unless exempt) are compulsory. The remaining subjects on offer are organised into blocks based on pupil preferences. Much work goes into the development of these blocks in order to best suit the requirements of the pupils. In order to derive maximum benefit from the process it is important that pupils give some thought to their strengths, abilities and, where known, future career and university aspirations in advance of making their subject choices.

Students will receive a One to One appointment with their Guidance Counsellor and given feedback on their DAT's results and how that can inform subject choice. This meeting takes place after the Junior Certificate Mock Examinations. Parents are welcome to attend.

Parents and students will also be invited to attend a **Subject and Programme Information Evening** that will give detailed information on the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), LCVP, Transition Year and Subject Choice specific information.

In addition to the seven main subject groupings, pupils will also benefit from classes in ICT, PE and Careers.

Based on these initial preferences the available subjects are then organised into blocks. These blocks are arranged to best meet the preferences of the majority of pupils. We endeavour to satisfy over 95% of pupil wishes, satisfying the first and second preferences of almost all pupils.

## Factors to Consider When Choosing Your Leaving Cert Subjects

### Third Language

Most students will study a European language. A **third language** is required for entry to National University of Ireland colleges (UCD, Maynooth University, UCC, NUIG and for a range of associated constituent college, all of which are listed on the [NUI website](#)) for most degree programmes in Arts, Human Sciences, Law, Social Science, Commerce, Medicine and Health Sciences and some other degrees. If you want to keep all your options open choose a modern foreign language.

### Science Subjects

Choosing a subject in the field of science is also a popular choice. Having a lab science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) is a requirement for some courses so it is good to be aware of these before dropping science from your list.

Be aware that most courses in healthcare professions require a science subject e.g. nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy. **Additionally some medical courses require two science subjects such as Dentistry and Medicine.**

Chemistry is a required subject for Pharmacy in RCSI and UCC. Trinity also requires Chemistry but will accept Physics/Chemistry as an alternative. Veterinary Science (UCD), Dentistry (UCC), Medicine (UCC), Medical and Health Sciences (UCC), Human Nutrition and Dietetics (TU Dublin) all require Chemistry.

Some engineering courses require a science subject but many will accept an alternative e.g. the Leaving Cert subject Technology is accepted as an alternative for Maynooth MH304 and UCC CK600.

A lab science is required for entry to many Science courses. However, some courses accept alternative subjects. Some of these include the following:

- UCD (DN200) accepts Applied Maths or Geography
- TU Dublin (DT201) accepts Engineering, Technology or Applied Mathematics.
- Maynooth University (MH201) accepts Applied Mathematics, Computer Science.

[Biology](#) is a firm favourite amongst students. Year-on-year the number of candidates taking Biology is in excess of the number of candidates taking all the other sciences combined. It is the most popular Leaving Cert Optional Subject. . . but this doesn't mean it's the easiest. Biology is a long course that requires a lot of rote learning. Mathematically minded students might do better in [Chemistry](#) or [Physics](#).

### **Compulsory Subjects in Leaving Certificate:**

- English
- Irish (Unless exempt based on a number of criteria)
- Mathematics

### **Optional Subjects available in Coláiste Chú Chulainn agus Coláiste Lú:**

- Accounting
- Applied Mathematics
- Art
- Biology
- Business
- Chemistry
- Construction Studies
- Design Communication Graphics
- Economics
- Engineering
- French
- Geography
- German
- History
- Home economics
- Music
- Physics
- Spanish

### **Additional Timetabled Subjects**

- ICT (Digital Creator)
- Applied Mathematics
- LCVP (Dependent on meeting the required Vocational Subject Groupings **VSG's** for that Year)
- Physical Education

# Leaving Cert Subjects

## Practical Group

[Construction Studies](#)

[Engineering](#)

[Design & Communication  
Graphics \(DCG\)](#)

## Science Group

[Physics](#)

[Applied Maths](#)

[Biology](#)

[Chemistry](#)

[Mathematics](#)

## Artistic & Creative Group

[Art](#)

[Music](#)

## Humanities Group

[English](#)

[Spanish](#)

[History](#)

[French](#)

[Gaeilge](#)

[German](#)

## Social Group

[Geography](#)

[Home Economics S&S](#)

## Business Group

[Accounting](#)

[Business](#)

[Economics](#)

[LCVP Link Modules](#)

## **Core Subject: English**

### **Course Overview:**

English is a core subject and is compulsory in all schools.

The exams at both higher and ordinary level require students to sit two papers. Junior Certificate results are often a good indication of what level a student should choose for Senior Cycle English. A large number of students take English at higher level but you should not underestimate the amount of work required to obtain a high grade

### **Language**

Students are required to study the following five designated areas of language in a wide variety of contexts, functions and styles.

1. The Language of Information.
2. The Language of Argument.
3. The Language of Persuasion.
4. The Language of Narration.
5. The Aesthetic use of Language.

### **Literature**

- Students are required to study one literary text from a list of prescribed texts.
- Students are required to study three other texts in the Comparative manner, according to the comparative modes prescribed for that year.
- Students are required to study at least six poets from the eight poets prescribed at Higher Level. At Ordinary Level 36 poems are prescribed.

Compulsory elements: At Higher Level a Shakespearean Play must be one of the texts chosen for study on its own or as an element of the Comparative study.

Optional Elements: At Ordinary Level the study of a Shakespearean play is optional.

### **Exam Structure**

**Paper I** Higher and Ordinary Level - 170 mins. - 200 marks.

**Section I** Three texts - one which is visual - are presented to students on a general Theme. Two sets of questions, an A and a B follow each text. Candidates must answer a question A on one text and a question B on a different text. (100 marks)

**Section II** (Composing) Candidates must write an extended composition in a specific genre of language from a list of seven choices. (100 marks)

**Paper II** Higher and Ordinary Level - 200 mins. - 200 marks.

**Section I** The single text (60 marks)

**Section II** The Comparative study (70 marks)

**Section III** Poetry (70 marks)

**Higher Level**

- (i) Unseen poem (20 marks)
- (ii) Prescribed poetry (50 marks)

**Ordinary Level**

- (i) Unseen poem (20 marks)
- (ii) Four poems will be printed on the exam paper and students must answer questions on one of the four. (50 marks)

## **Core Subject: Irish** (Unless DES Exemption in place)

### **Course Overview**

Irish is assessed at three levels i.e. Foundation Level, Ordinary Level or Higher Level.

The learner's oral competency is assessed around Easter of the final year, in an oral examination worth 40%, at each level, of the overall mark. The other three skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing are assessed in June. Aspects of literary works must be studied at Ordinary Level while at Higher Level these same works and additional material must be studied in detail.

The [NCCA](#) is currently undertaking a review of the Leaving Certificate Syllabus.

Students at Leaving Cert are introduced to Irish Literature and culture. The Leaving Cert exam takes the form of three parts: oral, aural (listening skills) and written examinations.

Recent revisions to the syllabus mean that there is now a greater emphasis on the spoken word and trying to be more fluent in our native tongue.

The oral exam is now worth 40% of the overall mark. It takes place after the Easter mid-term break. Students engage in conversation with an examiner and discuss different topics in Irish.

The aural exam takes place on the same day as the written paper and has been shortened in length as part of the new syllabus. The aural exam now will last about 20-25 minutes. Students will listen to a series of dialogues/conversations and answer questions about the content.

There are four components to the Leaving Certificate examination: an oral exam, a listening comprehension, a language paper and a literature paper.

### **A. PRÓS** Gnáthleibhéal agus Ardleibhéal

- Prescribed prose for Ordinary and Higher Level

Déantar staidéar anseo ar chúig phíosa phróis; scéal béaloideas, gearrscéal sliocht as úrscéal, sliocht as dírbheatháisnéis, agus scannán nó drama. 5 prose pieces are studied, a folk tale, a short story, an excerpt from a novel, an excerpt from an autobiography:

- Oisín i dTír na n-Óg
- An Gnáth Rud le Deirdre Ní Ghrianna
- Dís le Síobhán Ní Shúilleabháin
- Hurlamaboc le Éilís Ní Dhuibhne
- Cáca milis.

### **B. FILÍOCHT** Gnáthleibhéal agus Ardleibhéal

- Poetry for Ordinary and Higher Level

Déantar staidéar ar chúig dhán.

Five poems are studied:

- Géibheann le Caitlín Maude
- Colscaradh le Pádraig Mac Suibhne
- Mo Ghrá-sa (idir lúibíní) le Nuala Ní dhomhnaill
- An spailpín Fánach
- An tEarrach Thiar le Máirtín Ó Direáin

### **ARD LÉIBHÉAL**

Déantar staidéar ar úrscéal, nó dráma, nó cnuasach gearrscéalta nó dánta breise.

In addition Higher level students study a novel, or a play, or a collection of short stories or a selection of poems.

### **AN SCRÚDÚ CAINTE (Beal) The oral exam**

Seo a leanas an leagan amach a bhíonn ar an scrúdú cainte:

This is the order of the examination:

**(i) Tugann an dalta:** Ainm, Aois, Dáta breiathe, Seoladh Baile, Scrúduimhir don scrúdaitheoir

The pupil must give the examiner their name, age, date of birth, address and examination number

### **(ii) Léitheoireacht - Reading**

Caithfear cúig dhán a ullmhú don scrúdú cainte.

Five poems must be prepared.

Roghnóidh an scrúdaitheoir ceann amháin de na dánta sin,

The examiner will choose one of the poems.

Beidh ar an iarrthóir 12 líne a léamh amach ósard.

The candidate must read 12 lines out loud.

Tabharfar nóiméid amháin don iarrthóir an dán a ullmhú

### **(iii) Sraith Pictiúr - Picture Series.**

Caithfear 20 pictiúr a ullmhú don scrúdú.

20 pictures are prepared for the exam.

Roghnóidh an scrúdaitheoir ceann amháin as 20

The examiner will choose one to examine the student on.

### **Exam Structure**

Irish is assessed at three levels: Foundation Level, Ordinary Level or Higher Level.

The learner's oral competency is assessed around Easter of the final year, in an oral examination worth 40%, at each level, of the overall mark. The other three skills are assessed in June.

Aspects of literary works must be studied at Ordinary Level, while at Higher Level these same works and additional material must be studied in greater detail.

The Irish exam is divided between two written exams and an oral exam. The written exam carries 60% of the mark and the Irish oral exam carries 40% of the mark.

## **Core Subject: Mathematics**

### **Course Content**

The number of candidates sitting Higher Level Maths has grown steadily since 25 bonus CAO points were introduced in 2012 to successful students who pass the course. In 2012 22% of students who presented for Maths took the higher level paper. This has grown steadily to over 30% in recent years.

Mathematics is available for study at three levels: Foundation; Ordinary; Higher. Each level covers everything in the levels below it.

### **Aiming for Higher Level:**

Mathematics at higher level is designed to suit the needs of all students, whether they are continuing their study of mathematics to third level, studying it as a compliment to another subject (such as Business or Physics), or just looking for points.

The higher-level course familiarises students with the ideas of abstraction and rigorous proof, giving learners a feel for the great mathematical concepts that span many centuries and cultures, as well as covering practical everyday topics which students are meeting in their lives outside school.

Higher level maths is considered the most time consuming subject of all and often requires more hours of study than other subjects to get a good result. The course is demanding, but very rewarding, both in terms of intellectual achievement and potential career paths opened. However, once you master the skills and concepts, the amount of memory work is minimal. Worldwide, and particularly in Ireland there is huge demand for students who are technically capable, and higher level mathematics trains students in the skills needed to succeed.

### **Aiming for Ordinary Level:**

At ordinary level, students are offered mathematics that is meaningful, relatively accessible, and chosen with the understanding that many of them may go on to use and apply mathematics in their future careers, and all of them will meet the subject to a greater or lesser degree in their daily lives.

The course starts with practical and familiar problems, and gradually introduces more abstract ideas, leading towards the use of academic mathematics in the context of further study.

Most Leaving Cert students sit the ordinary level maths exam, often dropping down from higher level having become more aware of their level of ability and perhaps due to increased pressure in sixth year.

**Tip:** The most important thing to consider is how much time you are spending on higher maths. If you are spending too much time and but are capable of a H6 grade, you have the benefit of gaining 25 additional bonus points. On the other hand, if you are unlikely to achieve this grade, maybe the time could be better spent on other subjects you are stronger in.

### **Aiming for Foundation Level:**

At foundation level, maths is about developing a body of knowledge and skills that make sense, and can be used in many different ways as good method of solving problems and finding answers. It is intended to equip learners with the knowledge and skills required in everyday life. It is also intended to lay the groundwork for learners who may proceed to further studies in areas in which specialist mathematics is not required.

The course focuses primarily on fundamental skills and providing a basic but solid understanding of mathematical concepts which will remain relevant and useful in the future. As well as numerical problems, students can also expect to be presented with visual and spatial questions, as well as some theory.

**Tip:** It is useful to be aware of the range of college courses that accept /do not accept Foundation Level Maths, and the impact for both CAO Points and College entry. From 2017, CAO points will be allocated by certain colleges and institutions only - universities will not award points for Foundation Maths, but most will accept it as meeting the entry requirement. A Grade F1 will be awarded 20 Points and Grade F2 is worth 12 Points. Other restrictions may apply - for example, the Defence Forces do not accept Foundation Maths for Cadetships in the Army, Air Corps or Navy.

Project Maths divides the course into five 'strands' of maths which are studied at all levels, and in greater depth at higher levels:

- Statistics and Probability aims to provide an understanding of what probability is and why concepts such as variation and uncertainty are important. Students will also learn how to analyse statistics such as those in newspapers, business reports, and scientific data, so that they can draw meaningful and relevant conclusions.
- Geometry and Trigonometry deals with shapes such as circles and triangles, both on the coordinate plane and otherwise. The skills developed here are useful in areas such as architecture, landscape design, and agriculture, as well as visual design and spatial reasoning.
- Number Learners continue to make meaning of the operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of whole and rational numbers and extend this sense-making to complex numbers.
- Algebra builds on the relations-based approach of junior cycle, which has five main objectives:
  - to make use of letter symbols for numeric quantities
  - to emphasise relationship based algebra
  - to connect graphical and symbolic representations of algebraic concepts
  - to use real life problems as vehicles to motivate the use of algebra and algebraic thinking
  - to use appropriate graphing technologies (graphing calculators, computer software) throughout the strand activities.

### **Exam Structure**

At Ordinary level and Higher level there are two assessment components

- Mathematics Paper 1

- Mathematics Paper 2

Each paper will contain two sections – A and B.

- Section A will address core mathematics topics, with a focus on concepts and skills.
- Section B will include questions that are context based applications of mathematics.

At Foundation level there is one assessment component, a written paper. Learners will be assessed by means of problems set in meaningful contexts.

## **Option Subject: Accounting**

### **Course Overview**

Accounting is a business studies option within the Leaving Certificate programme. It covers aspects of business and social life which are not dealt with in any other subject in that programme. It is concerned with the preparation, recording, extraction, presentation and analysis of financial information for the purpose of making economic decisions.

The course also involves a Management Accounting section where the student will learn how to analyse business costs and how to prepare budgets.

This business subject teaches the skills and knowledge needed to understand how business works. Accountancy has the highest percentage of A grades among the Leaving Cert business subjects and one of the highest among all Leaving Cert subjects. The syllabus will help you:

- To contribute to a balanced and appropriate general education, leading to the personal and social development of each student together with a fostering of the concept of accountability
- To create awareness of the business environment and to provide each student with the knowledge, understanding and skills leading to a personal competence and responsible participation in this changing and challenging environment.
- To encourage the development of self-reliance, mental organisation and agility, clear and logical thinking, planning habits, methods of investigation and processes whereby accuracy can be ensured
- To enhance numeracy skills and promote awareness of the use of figures computations and statistics in the world of business and enterprise
- To expose students to aspects of business and enterprise with a view to career and working life, additional studies in accounting or as a basis for further education.

### **Course Content**

#### **Topics covered include:**

Financial Statements Preparation, Farm Accounts, Club Accounts, Company Accounts, Manufacturing Accounts, Financial Statements Analysis and Interpretation, Budgeting, Break-even Analysis, Cost Classification, Accounting Theory and Principles.

### **Exam Structure**

The subject is examined at higher and ordinary level. Both levels involve one exam of three hours duration. The exam paper is made up of three sections, the first two are based on the Financial Accounting section of the course and the third covers the Management Accounting section. Questions must be answered from all sections of the exam paper.

## **Option Subject: Applied Maths**

### **Course Overview**

The Applied Mathematics course at Leaving Certificate is called 'Theoretical Mechanics' or 'Mathematical Physics' in third level courses. It is one of many branches of the more general field of Applied Mathematics

### **Course Content**

The course essentially covers the mathematics behind the behaviour of objects when placed in various situations, such as being thrown as projectiles, bounced off walls or other objects, immersed in fluids, or swung around on a rope. There are 10 questions on the exam paper, each covering one of these topics in detail. However, the exam only requires the student to complete six questions, so it is not uncommon for teachers to focus on six or seven topics, which makes the course and workload more manageable.

The course tends to avoid theory-heavy questions (such as proofs and manipulating formulae) which are found on the Mathematics paper, instead offering practical problems with numerical solutions, such as computing the volume of fluid in a container, or finding the optimal angle to throw a projectile at so that it will travel as far as possible. As a result, Applied Maths is excellent for developing strong problem solving skills, which are very valuable for future employment.

### **Exam Structure**

There is a separate examination paper for Ordinary level and Higher level:

#### **Ordinary Level Paper**

This is a 2.5 hour paper (150 minutes) and carries 300 marks. You are required to answer 6 out of 9 questions and each carry 50 marks.

#### **Higher Level Paper**

This is a 2.5 hour paper (150 minutes) and carries 300 marks. You are required to answer 6 out of 10 questions. Each carry 50 marks.

## **Optional Subject: Art**

### **Course Overview**

The Leaving Certificate Art syllabus is a broadly based course, which is made up of four units. These units link together and are based on the everyday visual experience of the student's own environment.

This subject requires a lot of work and study for the Leaving Certificate and students need to be creative and/or be able to interpret the creative work of others.

**Note:** that the Leaving Cert Art course has **nothing** to do with the portfolio submissions which art and design colleges often require. The course does not aim to build a portfolio. All marks are given for work done on the day. However, it is common to take Art while preparing a portfolio, and much of the practice work done in class can be included.

### **Art is examined in three ways:**

1. Still Life and Imaginative Composition Coursework – completed between Feb – April of 6th year. This is worth 50% of marks
2. Life Drawing – examined in May, worth 12.5%
3. History of Art and Appreciation – examined in June, worth 37.5%

### **Course Content**

All students, both Ordinary and Higher level, follow a common course. The practical work can include Life Sketching, Still Life, Imaginative Composition, Design and Craftwork.

The History of Art and Appreciation is a broad course covering Irish and European Art, and also Art Appreciation. It requires looking at artworks through the use of reproductions, slides and art galleries, reading books and writing essays on different subjects.

### **Exam Structure**

The exam structure is the same at higher and ordinary level

Candidate will be required to answer all four papers:

- a) Imaginative Composition or Still Life - 100 marks
- b) Design or Craftwork - 100 marks
- c) Life Sketching - 50 marks
- d) History and Appreciation of Art - 150 marks

## **Option Subject: Biology**

### **Course Overview**

Biology remains one of the most popular subject choices. The syllabus requires a lot of memory work.

If your chosen subject is Biology you will gain an understanding of yourself and the natural world in which you live. The course uses practical activity and investigation to develop your skills and knowledge. The scope of biology is wide and varied and covers not only the traditional study of plants and animals but also areas such as molecular biology and biotechnology which have clear relevance to modern society

### **Course Content**

The syllabus consists of approximately 70% biological knowledge, understanding and skills; the remaining 30% deals with the technological, political, social and economic aspects of biology.

The syllabus introduced in 2002 has been developed in response to current knowledge and application of biology. Account has been taken of the need to include contemporary biological technologies such as DNA profiling and genetic screening. It aims to create in students an awareness of the application of biological knowledge to modern society and to develop an ability to make informed evaluations about contemporary biological issues. The course covers a wide range of topics, including cell structure and diversity, metabolism, genetics and human and flowering plant anatomy and physiology. The general principles of ecology are studied, and one particular ecosystem is examined in detail. An ecology field trip is arranged in the 5th Year. Particular emphasis is placed on the practical aspects of biology, and there are a number of mandatory activities that each student must carry out for themselves.

The course is divided into three units

- Unit 1 The study of life (ecology and food science)
- Unit 2 The Cell (Genetics, photosynthesis, respiration and enzymes)
- Unit 3 The organism (a study of body systems, plant biology and microbiology)

There are 22 mandatory practical activities. Three of these are examined each year, two of which have to be answered. A laboratory record of these activities has to be kept and available for inspection by The Department of Education. An ecology portfolio must also be completed. As of yet, no marks are awarded for the laboratory notebook or the portfolio. There is a strong emphasis on social and applied aspects e.g. when studying the breathing system a breathing disorder is studied.

Biology is often perceived as an easier subject than physics or chemistry but this is not so. There are high failure rates at ordinary level.

### **Exam Structure**

The examination at higher and ordinary level is three hours duration. The exam paper is divided into three units.

- Section A - Six short questions (answer five) 100 marks.
- Section B - Three questions on practical activities (answer two) 60 marks.
- Section C - Six long questions (answer four) 240 marks.

**Comments**

- It is recommended that a student taking Leaving Certificate Biology has a good understanding of Junior Science at higher level.
- Each student must have an aptitude and interest for laboratory work.
- A considerable amount of learning and study is necessary to do well in this subject.

## **Option Subject: Business**

### **Course Overview**

This subject teaches the skills and knowledge needed to understand how business works.

This is a practical course that introduces students to the world of business in a straightforward and logical way. It aims to create an awareness of the importance of business activity and to develop a positive and ethical attitude towards it. The importance of people in business is highlighted.

The course sets out to illustrate the process of setting up a business and developing a new product or service. It emphasises the importance of good management and deals with skills and activities necessary for good management practice. It also deals with the impact of technology, foreign trade, global firms and competition and with business structures and the national economy.

Business requires students to stay alert and to be aware of current related business media (e.g. newspapers, TV, radio). The course is theory based and therefore requires a lot of learning.

Leaving cert business has been on offer for many years now, so there are lots of past papers to help the student when revising.

### **Course Content**

- This subject is concerned with understanding the environment in which business operates in Ireland and in the wider world.
- It also involves equipping the students with a positive view of enterprise and its applications in the business environment, in both the public and private sectors.
- There are 7 core units covering the following topics: Introduction to people in business; Enterprise; Managing 1 & 2; Business in action; Domestic Environment and International Environment.
- There is a common syllabus covering Higher and Ordinary level, which will fulfil the aims and objectives of the course.
- A flexibility of design that caters for present day Irish business education and yet is capable of adaptation to future developments in a structured and efficient way.
- It assists students to develop their education for adult and working life including the creation of positive attitudes towards self-employment.
- From time to time there may be field trips or guest speakers where the course allows. These are not a compulsory part of the course and are organised at the teachers' discretion.

### **Exam Structure**

#### **Higher & Ordinary Level**

**Higher Level – 1 x 3 hour paper (400 marks); 3 sections.**

Section 1 – Short questions (8/10) 80 marks.

Section 2 – Applied Business Question – 80 marks (compulsory).

Section 3 – Long Questions (60 marks per question (4/7))

**Ordinary Level – 1 x 2.5 hour paper (400 marks); 2 sections.**

Section 1 – Short Question (10/15) 100 marks.

Section 2 – Long Questions (75 marks per question (4/8)).

## **Option Subject: Chemistry**

### **Course Overview**

The subject aims to provide a relevant course for students who will complete their study of chemistry at this level while, at the same time, providing a foundation course for those who will continue to study chemistry or related subjects following completion of their Leaving Certificate.

The Leaving Cert. course follows on directly from Junior Cert Science, and deals with more topics in a lot more depth. The course includes 28 mandatory practical experiments which must be completed in the lab, as well as a written paper including questions on the experiments and examining the theory and applications of chemistry. There are an amount of calculations involved. Chemistry has been the second most popular science subject for some time now.

### **Course Content**

The syllabus consists of approximately 70% pure chemistry; the remaining 30% deals with the social and applied aspects of chemistry.

The syllabus is comprised of all the essential and relevant topics within general chemistry. The major topics involved include the following:

1. Atomic structure
2. Volumetric analysis
3. Organic chemistry
4. Water chemistry
5. Reaction mechanisms.

There also is an option to be taken as part of the course which involves the study of atmospheric and industrial chemistry or the study of materials and electrochemistry.

Experimental investigations are an essential part of the leaving certificate course. Each student must complete at least 28 experiments over the duration of the course.

Experimental work is examined as part of the leaving cert exam and forms the basis for a minimum of three questions on the exam paper.

### **Exam Structure**

The leaving cert exam is three hours in duration. Each candidate must answer at least two questions from Section A (experimental section) and a maximum of six questions from Section B.

There are eleven questions in total on the exam paper, each carrying 50 marks.

There is no element of continuous assessment but experimental copies must be available for inspection by the State Examinations Commission. Students taking chemistry have to memorize the

chemical components of a series of prescribed experiments. They will need to present the elements of four such experiments in their exam.

## **Option Subject: Construction Studies**

### **Course Overview**

Construction Studies introduces students to the knowledge and skills associated with construction technology and construction materials and practices.

This is achieved through both theoretical study and integrated practical projects which provide a basis for the thorough exploration of materials and processes.

### **Course Content**

The course is essentially about the study of buildings and the built environment. The theoretical part of the course examines all parts of building from the planning stages to the completed building. The course is studied under the following main headings:

- Planning and Design
- Drawings and Documents
- Site Preliminaries and Foundations
- Walls, Partitions
- Floors, Roofs
- Fireplaces
- Windows and Doors
- Stairs
- Plastering and Painting
- Plumbing and Heating
- Services Drainage

### **Exam Structure**

- Construction studies is assessed at two levels, Ordinary level and Higher level
- There is a written examination, a practical test, and an assessment of student project work.

The examination at both higher and ordinary level has three separate components:

**Section A** Three hour written paper worth 300 marks. The exam consists of 10 questions out of which five have to be attempted. Question 1 is a compulsory drawing question of a building detail.

**Section B** 4-hour practical woodwork exam where the student makes a small item out of timber under exam conditions. The exam normally takes place in May. This accounts for 150 marks.

**Section C** Building Project where the student makes a building detail, a scale model of a building or a craft piece. The student also produces a portfolio to accompany the project that they make. Ideally this project must be completed by Christmas. This accounts for 150 marks.

## **Option Subject: Design Construction Graphics (DCG)**

### **Course Overview**

Design and Communication Graphics (DCG) has taken the place of technical drawing for the Leaving Certificate and provides students with the opportunity for visualising and comprehending information presented verbally or graphically.

If you are interested in taking this subject to Leaving Certificate level, you will need to have taken Tech Graphics to Junior Certificate level.

There is a great emphasis in the Leaving Certificate course on comprehension, analysis and problem solving. In simple terms, you must be able to understand what has to be done, analyse how you are going to approach it and then proceed to solve the problem.

Although it is not an essential subject for either architecture or engineering, it is regarded as a useful asset if you are thinking of a technical course. The DCG course now has a project aspect.

### **Quick Facts**

Design and Communication Graphics is assessed by means of two assessment components: a student assignment at 40%, of which CAD forms a significant and compulsory element, and an examination paper at 60%.

### **Course Content**

The course is comprised of two parts; Core areas of study and Optional Areas of Study

#### **Part One – Core Areas of Study**

Plane and Descriptive Geometry

- Project Systems
- Plane Geometry
- Conic Sections
- Descriptive Geometry of Lines and Planes
- Intersection and Development of Surfaces

Communication of Design and Computer Graphics

- Graphics in Design and Communication
- Communication of Design
- Freehand Drawing

- Information and Communication Technologies

## **Part 2 – Optional Areas of Study**

You will be required to study two of the optional areas listed below:

### Applied Graphics

- Dynamic Mechanism
- Structural Forms
- Geological Geometry
- Surface Geometry
- Assemblies

### **Exam Structure**

One Terminal Exam Paper: 60%

Student Assignment: 40%

**Terminal Exam:** 3 hours duration.

**Student Assignment** Emphasis on:

1. Elements of design
2. Communication graphics
3. Use of ICT'S in design

Different theme for higher and ordinary level

May take the form of:

- A design investigation and modification
- A concept design

## **Option Subject: Economics**

### **Course Overview**

This subject teaches the skills and knowledge needed to understand how business works.

Economics is regarded as the most practical business subject and is the study of how people manage limited resources such as money to meet their goals. By understanding the reasons why people spend their money in certain ways, economists can try to introduce incentives to change their behaviours. As a discipline, economics is divided into two broad categories:

**Microeconomics** considers how individual people decide what goods they are willing to buy or not buy based on maximising their personal 'utility' (getting as much benefit as possible from their money), and how firms and businesses will try to take advantage of consumers' habits to maximise profit. It also examines how multiple businesses in a market will price their goods based on their competitors and their various costs.

**Macroeconomics** considers how governments handle the economy as a whole - how they select policies which meet their goals, such as stable economic growth (avoiding recessions), minimising the national debt, and encouraging employment. How the government handles issues such as fiscal policy (how much money flows in the economy), international trade, and banking all have implications for economics stability and growth.

### **Course Content**

The subject is concerned with understanding the workings of a modern economy from both Macro and Micro level. Leaving Cert economics consists of eight main examination question areas:

Subject content

1. Demand, supply, equilibrium, utility and elasticity
2. Costs and market structures
3. Factors of production (including economists)
4. National income and the multiplier
5. Inflation, money, banking and monetary policy
6. International trade, balance of payments and the euro
7. Fiscal policy and taxation
8. The Government in the economy (including economic development and growth, population and emigration)

- Separate questions on elasticity and costs are also possible, and questions on broader topics such as the national income, Government policy - the list above is just a general guide
- There are no projects, practical aspects, field trips, etc. Teacher may include project work but it is not a requirement of the syllabus.
- There is a common syllabus covering Higher and Ordinary level, which will fulfil the aims and objectives.

### **Exam Structure**

The exam can be taken at both Higher Level and Ordinary Level

- One Paper – 2.5 hours duration
- Section A – 9 Q's - Students do 6 (100 marks each)
- Section B – 8 Q's - Students do 4 (75 marks each and 300 in total). There is a large element of choice here.

## **Option Subject: Engineering**

### **Course Overview**

Engineering promotes an educational understanding of the materials and a knowledge of the processes associated with mechanical engineering. This is achieved through the development of skills and initiative in the planning, development and realization of technological projects in a safe manner.

You would need to have done Junior Cycle metalwork to have a clear understanding of what is involved in engineering. There is a good mix of theory and practice involved in these subject matter. Many students enjoy the practical aspect but are not too happy when it comes to the theory. You are required present a project as part of the Leaving Certificate examination, so talk to the teacher involved so that you know exactly the balance between the theory and the practical elements in this subject.

### **Course Content**

- Health and Safety
- Benchwork
- Classification and origin of metals
- Structure of metals
- Iron and steel
- Non-ferrous metals
- Heat treatment of metals
- Fabrication and finishing of metals
- Corrosion of metals
- Plastics processing
- Machining
- Materials and Technology
- Materials testing
- Joining of materials
- Metrology
- Manufacturing processes

- Technology

### **Exam Structure**

Engineering is assessed at both Ordinary level and Higher level by means of an examination paper, a student project and a practical examination.

Workshop Processes: This section represents all the practical processes which may be applied in the school workshop integral with the related theory. This section carries 300 marks in the exam at both levels - Ordinary & Higher: There will be 150 marks for a practical exam and 150 marks for assessment of workshop/laboratory work and projects.

Materials & Technology: This section represents the wider knowledge and technology as a whole. In the written exam this section will carry 200 marks at Ordinary level and 300 marks at Higher level.

## Option Subject: French

### Course Overview

Leaving Certificate French aims to develop learners' communicative skills in French, to develop their strategies for effective language learning and raise their awareness of cultural, social and political diversity.

Assessment is by means of a written examination, and an aural and oral examination at two levels, Ordinary level and Higher level.

### Course Content

Course content for Higher and Ordinary levels is similar. However, oral and written skills are particularly important at higher level. A grade 'C' at higher level in the Junior Certificate is usually a minimum requirement for higher level French at Leaving Certificate.

Modern languages require students to be proficient in the following skills:

Oral/speaking  
Written  
Aural/listening  
Reading

A wide variety of themes are covered, for example:

Family  
School  
Hobbies  
Sport  
Current affairs

Grammar and Cultural Awareness are essential elements of these courses.

### Exam Structure

#### Mark Allocation for Leaving Certificate French:

Section	Higher Level	Ordinary Level
Speaking	25%	20%
Listening Comprehension	20%	25%
Reading Comprehension	30%	40%

Writing	25%	15%
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## **Optional Subject: Geography**

### **Course Overview**

Geography is a very popular subject choice. Up to 20% of the final grade is achieved before sitting the actual examination by completing a report on a geographical investigation - this is a great advantage for students.

### **Course Content**

The syllabus is divided into 4 main units. All students study the Core Units 1-3 and Elective Unit 4:

**Core Unit 1 - Patterns and processes in the physical environment**

This unit examines the relationship between the tectonic cycle, the rock cycle and the processes of landform development.

**Core Unit 2 - Regional geography**

This unit examines how economic, human and physical processes interact in regional settings.

**Core Unit 3 - Geographical investigation and skills**

This unit encourages the development of skills in handling spatial information leading to the completion of an individual geographical investigation.

**Elective Unit 4 - Patterns and processes in the economic environment**

This unit examines patterns in economic development and the growth of a single interdependent global economy.

**Higher Level**

Students taking the Higher Level also study Optional Unit 6 Global Interdependence. This unit examines the interdependent nature of global economic, social and political processes and challenges the differing views of development

**Geographical skills**

The teaching and application of skills is integrated into each of the units where appropriate

- Map and aerial photograph interpretation
- Satellite imagery
- Figure interpretation
- Census of population data
- Weather maps and data.

## Exam Structure

Leaving Certificate Geography is assessed at Ordinary and Higher level in ascending order of difficulty. There are two assessment components:

1. Written Examination (80%)
2. Geographical Investigation Report (20%)

Students complete two questions on the core units, one question on an elective unit, and one question on an optional unit.

Subject content:

1. Patterns and processes in the physical environment
2. Regional geography
3. Geographical investigation

Two Elective Units (pick one)

4. Patterns and processes in economic activities
5. Patterns and processes in the human environment

Four Optional Units (pick one; higher level only):

6. Global interdependence
7. Geoecology
8. Culture and identity
9. The Atmosphere-Ocean environment

The teaching of *geographical skills* is an important element of the course; students are encouraged to improve their ability to gather information (from map-reading, statistics, charts), present information (using diagrams, maps, and writing), and evaluate information (separate fact from opinion, make informed judgements, propose sensible solutions to problems). These skills are assessed in the Geographical Investigation.

## **Option Subject: German**

### **Course Overview**

Leaving Certificate German aims:

- To introduce the students to German as a living and vibrant method of communication thus helping them to appreciate a culture other than their own.
- To enable the students to acquire the necessary communicative skills that will allow them to take full part in classroom activities in German, participate in everyday transactions and interactions, extract information from and to interpret the various mass media communications, make further study and or possible career paths through the medium of the German language a realistic option.
- To achieve the above aims the students must be facilitated to develop a critical awareness of how meaning is organised and conveyed by the structures and vocabulary of the German language and to develop an understanding of language in general.

The aim is to continue and develop the aspects and aims of the Junior Cycle Programme and to develop skills in the following four areas leading to proficiency in all areas of the German language:

- Oral/speaking
- Written
- Aural/listening
- Reading

### **Course Content**

Modern languages require students to be proficient in the following skills:

Oral Proficiency in a range of personal, social, cultural and topical areas.

Aural Proficiency The ability to listen to and answer questions on a wide variety of auditory stimuli.

**Comprehension Proficiency** The students must be able to read, interpret, extract and manipulate texts ranging from literature to contemporary journalism and answer questions in the target language.

**Written Production Proficiency** The student must be able to react to a given stimulus in grammatically correct everyday German. These stimuli can take the form of an informal or formal letter, a reaction to a picture, photo, chart, etc. or expressing one's own opinion on a syllabus-related topic.

A wide variety of themes are covered, for example:

- Family
- School
- Hobbies
- Sport
- Current affairs

Grammar and Cultural Awareness are essential elements of these courses.

### **Exam Structure**

The examination will assess a candidate's ability to:

1. Understand the spoken language
2. Understand the written language
3. Communicate in the spoken language
4. Communicate in the written language

Mark Allocation for Leaving Certificate German:

<b>Section</b>	<b>Higher Level</b>	<b>Ordinary Level</b>
Speaking	25%	20%
Listening Comprehension	20%	25%
Reading Comprehension	30%	40%
Writing	25%	15%

## **Option Subject: History**

### **Course Overview**

The Leaving Cert History course is divided into two discrete *fields of study*:

- Early Modern (1492-1815) and
- Late Modern (1815-1993).

Each field is further divided into six Irish topics and six European topics.

Students are encouraged to develop research skills and an appreciation for the society in which they live.

The Leaving Certificate History Syllabus gives teachers a choice of 4 topics which will be studied from a selection of 12 topics in modern Irish and modern European history.

The study of history at Leaving Certificate fulfils many of the general aims and principles of the Leaving Certificate programmes.

- It emphasises the importance of individual thought.
- It fosters a spirit of inquiry and critical thinking.
- It helps to prepare students both for further education and for adult and working life.
- It helps to prepare students for their role as active and participative citizens.

History is a good all round education.

It is crucial when studying history to pay attention to the evidence presented, and to keep in mind factors such as bias and propaganda. Students are encouraged to consider the validity of different interpretations of evidence to develop a more balanced and grounded judgement.

The course is quite large and requires constant attention throughout the year. Research skills such as drawing on a wide variety of sources of evidence (such as maps, public records, political cartoons, and memoirs) are developed throughout the course. When writing, students are taught to produce focused, logical, and supported arguments.

Note that Leaving Cert History is **completely different** from the Junior Cert course!

### **Assessment**

Leaving Certificate history is assessed at two levels, Ordinary level and Higher level. There are two assessment components: a research study report (submitted prior to the examination) and a written examination.

### **Course Content**

The Leaving Certificate History Syllabus gives teachers a choice of 4 topics which will be studied from a selection of 12 topics in modern Irish and modern European history.

The topics are arranged in two discrete fields of study:

Early Modern, 1492-1815

Later Modern, 1815-1993

Students will study topics from one of the fields of study.

Within each field of study, there are six topics from Irish history and six from the history of Europe and the wider world.

Students will study two topics from Irish history and two from the history of Europe and the wider world from the selected field of study.

Two topics will be prescribed for documents-based study: one from the Early Modern field of study and one from the Later Modern field of study.

Students will engage in a documents-based study of the prescribed topic from their selected field of study.

### **Research Study**

Students undertake a Research Study which will take the form of a report to be submitted around Easter time before the Leaving Certificate exam in June.

This Research Study can be about any aspect of history, in any period. The teacher will help and oversee this work but the choice of subject matter is that of the student. This part of the assessment carries 20% of the total marks.

### **Exam Structure**

The History exam will last 2 hours 50 minutes and pupils will answer the documents-based study and three essays (one from each topic studied).

Ordinary level students follow an identical course, with a different emphasis in the way questions are asked on exam papers.

Assessment consists of two components: A written examination paper (80%) and A research study report (20%) submitted around Easter before the June exam.

The marks are to be weighted as follows:

#### Authentication procedures

The report must be the candidate's own work. Authentication procedures will be put in place to ensure compliance with this requirement. These will include a protocol in relation to the use of internet-sourced material.

#### The terminal examination

##### Mark allocation

The percentage of the total marks to be allocated to this component will be 80%.

- The Higher level paper  
Candidates will answer four questions, one on each of the four topics studied. All four questions will be of equal value. One of the questions will be documents-based.
- With the exception of topics nominated for the documents-based study, a specified number of questions will be asked on each of the topics.
- In the case of each topic, at least two of the three perspectives will be examined each year.

#### The Ordinary level paper

- Candidates will answer four questions, one on each of the four topics studied. All four questions will be of equal value. Three of the questions will be general questions, while one will be documents-based.
- One question will be set on each topic.
- An element of choice will be "built in" to each of the general questions.

A common format will apply to each of the general questions and each will be stimulus-driven.

The stimulus is intended to facilitate candidate recognition of the topic and as a reasonably gentle lead-in to more testing examination of knowledge and understanding. The common format will include stimulus-driven questions (testing comprehension and/or identification) and paragraphs or short essays linked to the key personalities and case studies.

## **Option Subject: Home Economics**

### **Course Overview**

The subject is an applied subject combining theory with practice. It is concerned with the management of resources (material and human) to meet the physical, emotional, intellectual, social and economic needs of individuals and families. The study of home economics emphasises the interdependent relationships that exist between individuals, families and their immediate and distant environments.

### **Course Content**

The syllabus consists of Core Areas and Three Electives:

#### **The Core Areas**

1. Food Studies - 45%
2. Resource Management and Consumer Studies - 25%
3. Social Studies - 10%

#### **Electives**

1. Home Design and Management - 20%  
or
2. Textiles, Fashion and Design - 20%  
or
3. Social Studies - 20%

Students opt for one elective area only. Those choosing the Textiles, Fashion and Design elective must produce a garment which will be inspected and graded.

The elective areas are extensions of the content contained in the Core Areas and provide students with the opportunity to study certain topics in more depth.

As part of the Core Areas, a mandatory section comprises of Practical Coursework which must be completed during the two years and will be sent to the Department of Education and Science for inspection. This is 20% of the final examination marks.

### **Exam Structure**

The Leaving Certificate Home Economics (Social and Scientific) syllabus is examined as follows:

## **1. Written Exam paper – 80%**

The written examination consists of three sections:

### Section A

12 short questions – Students answer 10.

These deal mainly with all the core areas of practice. (60 marks allocated)

### Section B

5 questions - Students are to answer Question 1 (Food Science and Nutrition) and any other 2 questions (from the other Core Areas). (180 marks allocated)

### Section C

3 questions - Students are to answer 1.

Elective question, based on which Elective was chosen to do in class. (80 marks allocated)

## **2. Practical Coursework - 20%**

This is worth 20% of the final mark; this is submitted in journal form earlier in the Leaving Certificate year.

## **Option Subject: Music**

### **Course Overview**

The Leaving Certificate Music syllabus provides continuity and progression from Junior Certificate Music. The general aims and overall shape of both is broadly similar. In providing the musical knowledge, understanding, practical competencies and attitudes appropriate to their age, abilities and interests, the syllabus caters for the varying needs of all students including those who wish to pursue further studies in music. You do not need music to progress into a music course in college but needless to say it would help.

The syllabus structure has been adopted to provide a fully balanced musical experience central to which is the development of musicality. Studying music at Leaving Cert. provides a vital basis for further education in the area and if students are good at music they can gain valuable points in the Leaving Certificate.

### **Quick Facts**

Performance - Examined in April of 6<sup>th</sup> year

Listening Paper - Examined in June of 6<sup>th</sup> year 90 minutes duration

Composition Paper -Examined in June of 6<sup>th</sup> year 90 minutes duration

### **Course Content**

The course consists of three main components: (1) Composing (2) Listening (3) Performance

#### **Ordinary level**

Students will choose one of the three activities to represent 50 per cent, e.g.

- Performing 50% Composing 25% Listening 25% or...
- Performing 25% Composing 50% Listening 25% or...
- Performing 25% Composing 25% Listening 50%

#### **Higher level**

Students will undertake additional studies (a Higher level elective in one of the three activities, e.g.: Performing 25% Composing 25% Listening 25% + One Higher level elective 25%.

This will allow Ordinary level and Higher level students to gain up to 50 per cent of the total marks in the musical activity that best suits their talent.

#### Musical Performance:

As mentioned above you can choose to designate 50% of your assessment to musical performance. If you choose this option you have a few further options open to you:

Perform 6 pieces of music on one instrument

Or

You can be examined on two instruments. If you choose this option you are required to perform four pieces of music on each instrument.

Or

You can choose to perform four pieces of music (25%) and be examined in Music Technology (25%). Music Technology involves inputting music into a software package on the computer and being able to perform music edits on it, e.g. add dynamics or tempo markings, or transpose the music. If you are good on computers this could be a nice option for you.

#### **Exam Structure**

##### Listening Paper

Examined in June of 6<sup>th</sup> year

90 minutes duration

Four set works, Irish music and general listening skills.

##### Composition Paper

Examined in June of 6<sup>th</sup> year

90 minutes duration

Melody writing and harmony

##### Performance

Examined in April of 6<sup>th</sup> year

Candidates may perform as a soloist or as part of a group or both.

Ordinary Level: 2 pieces on one instrument and one unprepared test.

Higher Level: 3 pieces on one instrument and one unprepared test

OR 2 pieces on each of two instruments and one unprepared test

Electives for extra 25%: Higher Level only Each candidate must choose one of the above components to study for this extra credit. The majority tend to opt for a Performance elective.

Listening Elective: The candidate must work on a music project over the course of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year. They must submit some work to the State Examinations Commission and sit an extra written paper in June.

Composition Elective: The candidate must undertake a large scale composition to be submitted to the Examinations Commission in their final year.

Performance Elective: This involves a more substantial performance during the examination period in April of 6<sup>th</sup> year.

## **Option Subject: Physics**

### **Course Overview**

The Leaving Cert physics course follows directly from Junior Cert Science, and covers more topics in greater depth.

Physics is often referred to as the maths side of science even though only a small proportion of the course is based on maths.

Physics aims to enhance the student's ability to think logically, observe and understand scientific method.

The course is heavily based around experiments - students are required to complete and write reports of 24 practical experiments throughout the two years of Senior Cycle, and be fully aware of:

- how to accurately record and analyse results
- how to minimise and accommodate for experimental errors.

These laboratory experiments, along with many more non-compulsory experiments are examined in detail on a section of the written exam paper.

### **Course Content**

The Physics course also involves a lot of theory which is tested in the written examination. Students are expected to be able to use various formulae with respect to SI units and significant figures, and have a good understanding of the role of physics in modern society and technology.

The study of Physics for Leaving Certificate is broken down into eight sections or topic areas:

(a) Six compulsory sections (b) Two option sections (Higher paper only, one to be done)

#### Compulsory sections

- Optics / Waves: the study of light and sound and real life applications of the theory.
- Mechanics: time, space, distance, speed and acceleration.
- Heat: changes of state, energy conversions and mathematical problems.

- Electricity: develops on from simple circuits to more detailed concepts.
- Electricity and Magnetism: gravity, relationship between electricity and magnetism, study of how a motor works, ac. and dc. circuits and phenomena with real world applications.
- Atomic Physics: cathode rays, x-rays, radioactive decay, fission and fusion, nuclear reactors and real world applications.

Options:

Particle Physics: recent type of physics, delving into the new discoveries leading to a better understanding of the formation of the universe and where we came from.

Applied Electricity: detailed study of electricity and the working of a motor developing from electricity already studied.

At Higher Level, there is a deeper, more quantitative treatment of physics. The two option sections are omitted from the Ordinary Level Leaving Certificate course.

The course also consists of 24 core mandatory experiments complementing each section in an aim to develop students' technical skills and enhance understanding and reinforce key concepts.

### **Exam Structure**

The leaving cert exam is three hours in duration. A total of 400 marks are available for the exam.

Section A:

- Students must answer 3 out of 4 questions
- 120 marks: 40 marks per question
- Questions are based on experimental procedures and use of results

Section B:

- Students must answer 5 out of 8 questions
- 280 marks: 56 marks per question
- Questions are more broad and theory based

Leaving Certificate Physics is assessed by means of one terminal examination paper at each level. Students are required to keep a record of their practical work over the two years of the course.

**Option Subject: Spanish**

## Course Overview

Spanish follows a common syllabus framework for the teaching and examining of modern languages in the Leaving Certificate. The syllabus aims to develop learners' communicative skills in Spanish, to develop their strategies for effective language learning and raise their awareness of cultural, social and political diversity.

Assessment is by means of a written examination, and an aural and oral examination at two levels, Ordinary level and Higher level.

## Course Content

This syllabus aims to lead every pupil towards four basic outcomes as a result of the experience of modern language learning in the classroom:

- (a) a communicative competence in the target language
- (b) awareness about language and communication
- (c) an understanding of how to go about learning a foreign language
- (d) a level of cultural awareness

1. To foster in learners such communicative skills in the target language as will enable them to:

- take a full part in classroom activities conducted in the target language;
- participate in normal, everyday transactions and interactions, both spoken and written, both at home and abroad;
- extract information and derive enjoyment from the mass media and the more accessible literature of the target language community;
- consider as a realistic option the possibility of pursuing leisure activities, further study and/or career opportunities through the medium of the target language.

2. To give students a critical awareness of how meaning is organised and conveyed by the structures and vocabulary of the target language, and thus to contribute to their understanding of the workings of human language in general.

3. To help learners develop strategies for effective language learning.

4. To equip learners with a broad acquaintance with the cultural, social and political complexion of contexts in which the target language is a normal medium of communication and thus to help raise their awareness of cultural, social and political diversity generally.

## Exam Structure

(1) **Oral Examination (25%)** the Spanish oral exam consists of two parts, personal questions and role-plays and typically last between 12 and 15 minutes depending on the student.

Part 1: The examiner will use personal questions to assess knowledge of tenses in the following order; present, past and future and/or conditional tenses. Make sure you respond

in the correct tense. If you make a grammatical mistake or mispronounce something don't just keep talking. If you realise your mistake say sorry (Lo siento) and then what you meant to say. You will less likely be penalised for mistakes.

Part 2: this comes after the personal questions when the examiner asks a student one role-play from five prepared. Have fun with this and try avoid monotony, let the examiner know that you are feeling what you are saying by using intonation in your speech and eye contact. Don't spend the whole time looking at the sheet, rather try to enjoy it and leave a positive impression.

(2) **Listening Examination (20%)** to do well in this the most important thing is to be prepared. A segment on the weather forecast always appears. Make this an area you know inside out. If you know the vocabulary it's easy marks. Do the listening comprehensions of previous years, this will help you get used to the process. Learning as much vocabulary is always useful to all parts of the Spanish exam.

(3) **Written exam (55%)** you will need a lot of vocabulary for the written exam. Make a note of the words that come up frequently and learn them off. Also, learn all the tenses and become familiar with the endings of different verbs, especially the irregular ones.

In this exam you will be asked to look within a comprehension piece for a Spanish sentence/phrase/word that is similar to a phrase they have given you. Have a look at the phrase and the tense it is written in - the phrase you are looking for in the text will normally be in the same tense so this will narrow down your search.